

REMARKS

Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 2, 4-10, 14, 16-28 and 41 are pending, and claims 1, 3, 11-13 and 15 are cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer (claims 29-40 having been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer, in the Preliminary Amendment dated August 16, 2004).

In the Office action, the Examiner allowed claims 18-28. Applicant graciously thanks the Examiner for so concluding.

In the Office action, the Examiner objected to claims 6, 8 and 17 as being dependent upon a rejected based claim, but concluded that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of their respective base claim and any intervening claims.

In response, claim 8 has been rewritten in independent form to include most (not all) of the limitations of base claim 1 and intervening claim 3. Applicant respectfully submits, however, that claim 8, as now amended, and all claims dependent thereon patentably distinguish over the art. Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that claim 8, as now amended, and all claims dependent thereon are in condition for allowance.

Similarly, new independent claim 41 has been added to include most (not all) of the limitations of base claim 1, intervening claim 3, and claim 6, reciting a combination of features which applicant respectfully submits patentably distinguishes over the art. Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that new independent claim 41 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 17 has been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of base claim 13 and intervening claim 15, reciting a combination of features which applicant respectfully submits patentably distinguishes over the art. Accordingly, applicant respectfully submits that new independent claim 17 and all claims dependent thereon are in condition for allowance.

In the Office action, claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, on a formal matter. Claim 10 has been amended to traverse this rejection.

In the Office action, claims 1-5, 7 and 9-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent 6,262,679. To expedite issuance of a Notice of Allowance on all pending claims, applicant has amended the claims, as described above, thus obviating this claim rejection, however, by so amending the claims for expediency, applicant does not

acquiesce to this claim rejection. Accordingly, applicant reserves the right to further prosecute in this or any related application the now-or-previously cancelled claims or any other claim supported by the application, as originally filed, and the right to respond to the rejection of claims 1-5, 7 and 9-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. patent 6,262,679, should such a rejection or a similar rejection be made in further prosecution in this or any other application.

CONCLUSION

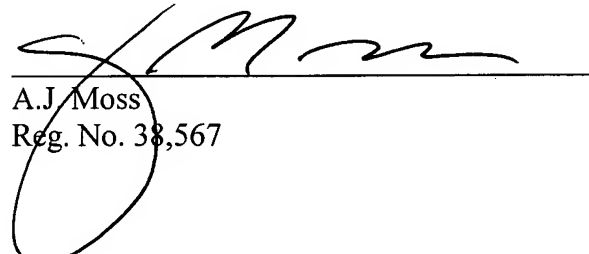
Reconsideration is respectfully requested. Applicant respectfully submits that the case is in condition for allowance and requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of the pending claims under consideration.

Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and requests that any required fee, except for the Issue Fee, to maintain the pendency of this case be charged to **Deposit Account No. 19-3878**.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if it would in any way advance prosecution of this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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A.J. Moss
Reg. No. 38,567

SQUIRE, SANDERS & DEMPSEY L.L.P.
Two Renaissance Square
40 North Central Avenue, Suite 2700
Phoenix, Arizona 85004-4498
(602) 528-4839